

Voting at the surface

Roll call votes in the European Parliament¹

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Abstract

Roll-call vote analysis is an increasingly popular method for evaluating decision-making in international organization. However, recent research indicates that roll-call votes may be a misleading source of information about voting behavior due to selection effects associated with the assignment of votes for roll call. Drawing a recent theoretical model (e.g., Carrubba, Gabel & Hug 2008), we evaluate whether the sample of roll-call votes in one prominent international organization’s legislature—the European Parliament—are contaminated by selection effects. Using a combination of information about observed voting behavior and requesting behavior, we test several empirical implications of the model to assess whether it captures the data generating process of roll-call votes. Our results, while tentative, indicate that the theoretical model provides a reasonable account of observed voting and requesting behavior. This suggests that inferences based on roll call votes in the EP—and perhaps other international organizations that only partly make available information on votes, are fraught with considerable inferential problems.

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1 Introduction

Increasingly international organizations comprise bodies in which voting is the main decision making rule (e.g., the European Parliament (EP), the United Nations (UN) Security Council and its General Assembly, the International Labor Council of the International Labor Organization (ILO), etc.). Scholars have not waited long to rely on information on voting in such bodies to draw inferences of various types, from clustering of particular nations in the UN general assembly (Alker 1964, 1965), to the use of such votes to study closeness to particular member countries (e.g., Thacker 1999) and the relative influence of ideology and national origins (e.g., Hix 2002, Hix, Noury & Roland 2006*b*) on voting decisions. Many of these analyses rely on sophisticated tools to gain insights into such international bodies as the UN Security Council (Voeten 2002), the ILO's International Labor Council (Boockmann 2003), or the European parliament (Hix, Noury & Roland 2006*a*).

Unfortunately, this recent scholarship hardly pays attention to the increasing evidence that roll call votes may give us biased information, provided that these votes do not cover the whole universe of votes.³ Increasing evidence from national parliaments (e.g., Roberts 2007, Chiou & Yang 2008, Hug 2009 (forthcoming)) and the European parliament (e.g., Clinton and Lapinski 2008; Gabel & Carrubba 2004, Carrubba, Gabel, Murrah, Clough, Montgomery & Schambach 2006, Thiem 2006 and 2009) suggests that roll call votes, which give us only a partial glimpse at legislative voting, may lead to partial and biased inferences. The same selectivity issue is, however

³ Especially in international bodies this is unlikely to be the case, given the much prominent haggling behind closed doors.

also present in other international voting bodies. As Boockmann (2003) reports for the ILO International Labor Council, only a subset of votes is recorded. Similarly, Peterson (2005) discusses that for some decisions in the UN no individual voting records are available.⁴

To understand whether these different selection processes affect the inferences we wish to draw from roll call votes, theoretical guidance is required. More specifically, only if we have a theory explaining under what circumstances roll-call votes are carried out, can we attempt first of all to assess whether biased inferences are likely, and second propose corrections for these inferences.

In this paper we rely on a theoretical model conceiving of roll-call requests as a means to discipline party members (Carrubba, Gabel & Hug 2008) and test its implications with data stemming from the European Parliament.⁵ In these tests we find suggestive evidence in support of the theoretical model. Consequently, scholars relying on roll call data, also (or even particularly) from international bodies, need to be cautious when not lacking a complete record of all votes at hand.

In the rest of the paper we proceed as follows. In the next section we review the literature on voting in international bodies and the recent work on selection biases in roll call analyses. Section three briefly reviews the formal model proposed by Carrubba, Gabel & Hug (2008) and presents the main implications that will be tested empirically

⁴ Generally scholars studying UN General Assembly voting only have available roll call information on resolutions that passed (see Voeten 2000), since the UN (at least since 1985) only publishes these votes.

⁵ Carrubba and Gabel (1999) and Chiou and Yang (2008) also propose and discuss models for roll call requests. See also Pemstein's (2009) innovative attempt to predict roll call requests based on the speeches in the plenum.

with data from one international body, namely the European parliament. We present the various datasets on which we draw in section four, before presenting the results from our empirical results. Section five concludes and sketches our future research.

2 Voting in supranational bodies and selection biases

Interest in voting in supranational bodies has increased considerably over the last decades. Possible problems of selection biases, however, have only sparingly been discussed. In this section we first review briefly the work on voting in supranational bodies before turning to a brief discussion of possible selection biases in roll call analyses.

Voting in supranational bodies

Early studies on voting in the UN general assembly mostly tried to assess whether patterns were detectable. Given that this early work appeared during the cold war (e.g., Alker 1964, Alker & Russett 1965, Marin-Bosch 1987, Holloway & Tomlinson 1990), bloc patterns were of greatest interest. While this early work was largely descriptive, more recent work attempts to explain the voting behavior of national delegates (e.g., Voeten 2000, Boockmann & Dreher 2006). Voeten (2002) focuses on similar issues when dealing with the UN security council. Related work attempts to link aid and IMF grants to voting in these bodies (e.g., Thacker 1999) and to assess voting in the ILO's International Labor Council (Boockmann 2003).

Much more strongly developed is work on the European Parliament (EP). Starting with the early work of Attina (1990) and Brzinski (1995) scholars were interested in the cohesion of party groups (see also McElroy 2008). Related work has employed more sophisticated tools and exploited longer periods of observation to evaluate the determinants of voting decisions (e.g., Hix, Noury & Roland 2006*a*).

Selection effects

The vast majority of studies presumes that roll call votes accurately reflect all voting decisions in a parliament, which is accurate in some instances, such as the contemporary US Congress (but see Clinton and Lapinski 2008 on selection problems in a historic context). However, in many parliaments only a fraction—and sometimes a very small fraction—of votes are recorded (see Hug 2005). Importantly, these samples of voting behavior are likely unrepresentative of voting behavior in general. Work on national parliaments (e.g., Roberts 2007, Chiou & Yang 2008, Hug 2009 (forthcoming)) and the European Parliament (e.g., Gabel & Carrubba 2004, Carrubba, Gabel, Murrah, Clough, Montgomery & Schambach 2006, Thiem 2006 and 2009) demonstrates that roll call votes are hardly a random subset of all votes, and thus inferential biases are quite likely. Similar selection biases in roll-call voting may be expected in other international bodies. Sturm & Dreher (2006), for instance, find that countries receiving aide from the World Bank vote more frequently in line with the G7 countries in the UN's General Assembly.

If this is the case, roll call votes from the General Assembly might display similar biases, since roll call votes might be used to ensure the support of positions defended by G7 countries. In other bodies, like the ILO's International Labor Council, similar phenomenon might occur, where instead of party disciplining we might expect disciplining of delegations from specific countries or regions.

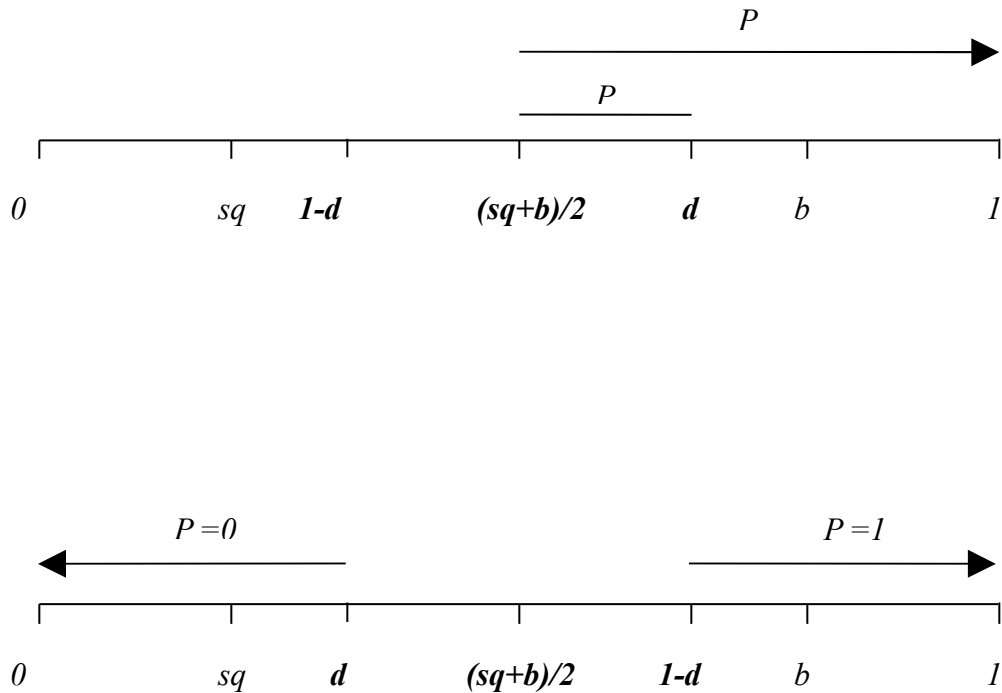
It is important to point out that we can only speculate as to whether or how the selection of votes for roll call might influence inferences in these setting, as extant studies fail to describe the sample properties, the frequency of roll calls, or the selection procedure for roll-call votes. But even with the basic descriptive information about roll-call votes in an international organization, we cannot easily interpret roll-call vote behavior without theory. That is, we need to understand the process that generates the data (the roll-call votes) in order to draw appropriate inferences about roll-call voting behavior and adjust our inferences about voting behavior in general to account for the selection process. Previous studies provide very limited guidance in even positing a model of the data generation process. The literature discusses a series of possible explanations for roll-call requests (for a survey see Carrubba & Gabel 1999). For example, Fennell (1974) and Jenkins and Stewart (2003) present empirical evidence from Argentina and the United States Congress that roll-call votes are used by party leaders to enforce discipline. Alternatively, legislators might request roll-call votes to signal their position to a third party (e.g., Thiem 2006 and 2009) or to embarrass another set of legislators by forcing them to take an unpopular public position.

However, of these possible motivations, only one—disciplining—is the basis of a theoretical account of roll-call vote requests (Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug 2008). That model, although fairly simple in assumptions, demonstrates the value of working through a formal model, as it casts serious doubt on several common conclusions about the effect of disciplining on roll-call vote requesting behavior and its consequences for observed voting behavior. Thus, we focus our empirical efforts on testing implications of that model. We want to emphasize that we strongly support the development of alternative models of the data generation process based on the signaling motivation. But in the absence of such a model, we do not want to speculate informally on what a signaling motivation might imply in terms of tests for our empirical analysis.

3 Theory and theoretical implications

Carrubba, Gabel & Hug (2008)—CGH—develop a formal theoretical model of legislative politics that assumes party leaders (or country delegates in an IO) request roll call votes for disciplining purposes. The setup is a rather simple spatial one with two party groups located at two points of a one-dimensional policy space. These locations correspond to the party leaders' ideal points. Uniformly distributed around these ideal points with dispersion d are the ideal points of the members of these party groups (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Given Euclidean preferences, the locations of the status quo and the proposed bill determine the share of MPs (denoted P in figure 1) of each party (i and j located at 1 and 0 , respectively) that will vote in favor of the bill. By requesting a roll call vote and adopting disciplining measures, this share of MPs supporting the bill can be increased by party leadership. The sequence of moves is as follows:

1. Party i makes a proposal, b .
2. Both parties choose simultaneously whether to call a RCV.

3. If either party requests a RCV, each sets some level of disciplining.
4. Outcomes are realized.

CGH solve this game for its subgame-perfect equilibria and derive a series of observations and implications. Four observations give detailed information on the relationship between bill location and roll call requests, while four implications focus more specifically on the effect of bill location and roll-call request on the relative cohesiveness of parties. Below, we state a series of hypotheses based on a subset of these observations and implications for which we have some empirical data allowing for initial tests. We compare these hypotheses also with the more or less explicitly stated hypotheses in other studies on roll call votes in the European parliament. This will highlight that our derived hypotheses sometimes rejoin those of other authors but almost systematically introduce additional complexities.

A. Patterns of observed party cohesion on roll-call votes

CGH derive a variety of predictions about patterns of party cohesion on observed (roll-call) votes. Most of these depend on vote-specific information regarding the position of the status quo, the location of the proposal, or the level of homogeneity in the policy preferences of legislators. However, the equilibrium cohesion scores show some general patterns that are independent of these factors. Specifically, the

equilibrium cohesion scores in figures 3 and 4 (CGH: 560-563) support the following hypothesis:

H1: The cohesion level of the non-proposing party on roll-call votes requested by the proposing party is not lower than when that non-proposing party requests the roll-call vote.

Compared to other work on roll call votes in the EP, table 1 shows that this hypothesis finds no parallel in the literature.

Table 1. Hypotheses on the cohesion of parties as a function of the proposing party

H1: Rcv request by proposing party	Carrubba, Gabel, Hug (2008, 560-563)	Thiem (2009)	Kreppel (2002)	Hix, Noury, Roland (2006)
Observed cohesion of non-proposing party	\geq	0	0	0

B. Roll-call vote requesting behavior

CGH predict several patterns in roll-call requesting behavior as a function of the size (number of legislators) of the party proposing legislation and the level of heterogeneity in the preferences of legislators—i.e., the level of overlap between members of parties near the median legislator. Based on the discussion regarding observations 2 and 3 (CGH: 557-559), we derive two hypotheses:

H2: For a given level of heterogeneity of legislator preferences, the likelihood of a roll-call vote request from the non-proposing party decreases with the size of the proposing party.

H3: The likelihood the proposing party requests a roll-call is a function of both heterogeneity and the size of the proposing party. As size increases and heterogeneity decreases, the likelihood the proposing party requests a roll-call vote increases.⁶

If we compare these two hypotheses with similar ones in the literature (table 2 and 3) we find that ours is more specific than competing ones.

Table 2. Hypotheses on the size of the party and roll call requests

H2/H3: Size of party	Carrubba, Gabel, Hug (2008: 557-559)	Thiem (2009: 141)	Kreppel (2002)	Hix, Noury, Roland (2006)
Rcv request by non-proposing party	- (size of proposing party)	- (size of non proposing party)	0	0
Rcv request by proposing party	+ (size of proposing party)	- (size of proposing party)	0	0

Table 3. Hypotheses on the heterogeneity of parties and roll call requests

H3: Heterogeneity of party	Carrubba, Gabel, Hug (2008: 557-559)	Thiem (2009, 140)	Kreppel (2002, 128)	Hix, Noury, Roland (2006)
Rcv request by proposing party	- (heterogeneity of proposing party)	- (heterogeneity of proposing party)	- (heterogeneity of proposing party)	0
Rcv request by non-proposing party	0	- (heterogeneity of non-proposing party)	- (heterogeneity of non-proposing party)	0

⁶ More specifically, this hypothesis holds when there are no instances of extremely high heterogeneity and when the status quo is fairly far from the ideal point of the proposing party. This last condition seems reasonable to assume, since we would expect that a party's incentive to propose a change to a status quo policy increases with the distance between the status quo and the party's ideal point.

C. Hypotheses regarding the relationship between the location of the status quo, the location of the proposal, and observed requesting and voting behavior.

CGH's model also generates hypotheses related to the spatial configuration of the status quo and the location of the proposed bill. We consider one of these hypotheses here.

Observation 4 from CGH (558) allows for the following hypothesis:

H4: Requests for RCV by the proposing PG are associated with proposals that are closer to its ideal point than RCVs requested by non-proposing PGs. And, requests for RCVs by the non-proposing PG are associated with proposals farther from the ideal point of the proposing PG than when the proposing PG requests a RCV.

Table 4 shows that such a specific relationship is nowhere hypothesized in the literature.

Table 4. Hypotheses on roll call requests and the location of the proposal

H4: Rcv request by proposing party	Carrubba, Gabel, Hug (2008, 558)	Thiem (2009)	Kreppel (2002)	Hix, Noury, Roland (2006)
Distance between proposal and the ideal-point of the proposing party	-	0	0	0

4 Testing the Model in the European Parliament

We test these hypotheses with data from the European Parliament (EP). The EP has a variety of advantages for these tests. For one, we have an unusually rich supply of secondary data. In addition, legislative politics in the EP is widely studied, providing a

comprehensive understanding of legislative procedures, legislative parties, and the roll-call vote requesting process.

The CGH model—and the hypotheses we derive from it—makes several important assumptions about the legislative context that we consider plausible depictions of EP legislative politics. Below, we provide a general description of the EP and the data we will employ. But we first want to highlight several key features of the CGH model that we will examine as to their compatibility with legislative politics in the EP. First, the hypotheses we test assume that the legislative agenda is endogenously defined—i.e., the location of the legislative proposal is a function of the distribution of legislator preferences and the potential for a roll-call vote. Second, all parties are eligible to request a roll call on any vote. Third, roll-call votes are requested so as to facilitate disciplining party members so as to achieve legislative policy goals. Fourth, the model assumes only two parties.

As we discuss below, the EP context and our data reasonably approximates these features. However, formal theoretical models, by design, are abstract representations of the empirical world, which means we never have perfect empirical tests. The EP is no different with respect to the CGH model. Thus, we are careful below to raise concerns about why or how the model may fail to account for observed behavior in the EP.

The EP currently consists of 785 members, elected in national elections every five years. Once elected, national party delegations form coalitions called party groups. The party groups manage the internal organization of the legislature: e.g., assign

committee membership, allocate speaking time, and distribute legislative resources. A great deal of empirical research has assessed the role of the party groups in organizing voting behavior. Hix, Noury & Roland (2006a), which provides the most comprehensive and rigorous examination of EP voting behavior, conclude that party groups have a strong influences on their members' votes and that this influence trumps national influences and, even in some high-profile cases, national party pressures. In short, party group discipline is strong (Hix 2002).

The EP votes on legislative initiatives and related amendments. All legislative proposals are initiated by the Commission, which is an independent European Union (EU) institution. The EP also votes frequently on resolutions and amendments to resolutions that are initiated in the EP by party groups, committees, and legislators. Resolutions are not legally binding and may address issues that are beyond the authority of the EU.

Voting in the European Parliament is by one of four methods: voice, show of hands, electronic, and roll call. The voting behavior of members is recorded only for roll-call votes. A vote can be designated as a roll call by a party group or at the request of thirty-two members. Party groups are far and away the most common source of these requests. Roll-call votes are not a random sample of all votes in the EP. Roll calls constitute about a third of all votes, and a much smaller portion of legislative votes. More specifically, Carrubba, Gabel, Murrah, Clough, Montgomery & Schambach (2006) document the sample properties of roll-call votes in the 1999-2000 legislative

session and shows that roll-call votes diverge from the population of votes in terms of issue area and legislative procedure (see also Thiem 2006 and 2009).

Returning to the three key features of the legislative context in the CGH model, the EP is generally compatible. First, the agenda for legislation is endogenous. This is most obvious on resolutions, amendments on resolutions, and amendments to legislation, since members of the EP propose all these. In contrast, legislative initiatives originate in the Commission. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the Commission is interested in the success of legislation and therefore makes proposals in anticipation of voting behavior in the EP. That is, these proposals ought to be endogenous to the preferences of the members of the EP and the likelihood of roll-call votes and the related party disciplining. Also, it is important to note that the Commission consists of Commissioners with clear national party affiliations and these national parties have representation in the party groups, which links the Commissioners to party groups. However, to the extent this is not true, tests of the model with legislative votes will likely falsify the hypotheses. Second, consistent with the model, all party groups can request roll-call votes. Third, the party group leaders, who are the typical source of roll-call vote requests, can use the roll call to discipline their members.

The extent to which discipline is the primary motivation for requests is a matter of some debate. First of all, one might question the power of party group leaders to discipline their members (see Thiem 2006 and 2009 but also Kreppel's (2002, 128f interview evidence). Even in the larger party groups with organized party institutions,

leaders lack some important tools that national parties often wield in disciplining their members in national legislatures. In particular, party group leaders do not control whether their members are nominated for re-election. While this limitation certainly reduces the power of party group leaders relative to national party leaders, we maintain that party group leaders retain sufficient powers to induce members to vote the party group line. For one, discipline may simply involve the enforcement of an agreed vote trade among party group members. Developing such an agreement and monitoring its success are costly to leaders, but may not require substantial carrots or sticks. In addition, party group leaders influence the allocation of most of the perks of office in the EP and access to prized committee positions, which are of value to MEPs (Bowler & Farrell 1995). Indeed, McElroy (2008) shows that members who do not vote the party line may suffer in their committee assignments as a result. For sure, national delegation leaders in party groups also play a significant role in the allocation of these perks of office. But we consider the assumption that party group leaders can discipline their members as plausible, at least for the larger party groups with organizational capacity.

Secondly, even if one assumes party group leaders can discipline, one might question whether PG leaders use roll-call votes for disciplining designed to pass legislation rather than to pursue other goals. This is probably most apparent on resolutions. Resolutions can serve a variety of purposes, ranging from lobbying the Commission to initiate legislation in a particular policy area to taking a symbolic stand on a current event. Resolutions targeted at the Commission's legislative agenda

probably resemble legislative votes where party groups are motivated to demonstrate majority support. But other types of resolutions may not have this character. To the extent this is true, votes on resolutions will be a difficult venue to test the implications of the CGH model.

Finally, the EP consists of more than two parties. CGH (568) address this issue and argue that the intuition of the model used to justify the above hypotheses should carry over to the multi-party context.

In sum, we consider the EP as a plausible—but challenging—venue in which to test the aforementioned implications of the CGH model. To the extent the EP deviates from the key features of the model, we expect the data to support the null hypothesis that our hypothesized relationships do not hold.

Test of Hypothesis 1

To test hypothesis 1, we need information about the cohesion of party groups and the identity of the proposing party group and the identity of the requesting party group. We focus on the fifth EP (1999-2004). Hix, Noury & Roland (2006a) have assembled a database of all roll-call votes from this legislature and provide sufficient information to identify the rapporteur and requesting party group for many of the votes. We can also calculate the cohesion scores for each party group on each vote. We use the same method of calculating cohesion as that used in Hix, Noury & Roland (2006a). This measure ranges from zero to one (highest cohesion).

It is important to note that party groups do not make proposals for amendments or resolutions. Instead, proposals come from committees and each proposal has a “rapporteur” who is responsible for drafting the committee report for the plenary session. The rapporteur exercises unusual influence over the content of the proposal (Ringe 2005). We therefore use the party group of the rapporteur as a proxy for the party group of the proposal.

From these data, we focus only on roll-call votes on final votes on resolutions. The dataset does not provide consistent information about the proposer of amendments on resolutions. And, we have not yet coded the party group affiliated with legislative proposals (for a coding strategy to do this, see discussion below regarding hypotheses 2 and 3). It is important to note, though, that the majority of roll-call votes were on resolutions, not legislative votes. So, we do not anticipate a major change in the statistical evidence due to the addition of legislative votes.

We focus here on the three largest party groups, the EPP (Christian Democrats), PES (Socialists), and ELDR (Liberals), which accounted for almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the MEPs in the fifth parliament (626 MEPs). In the future, we plan to extend the analysis to all party groups. But the leaders of these three party groups, because of their party groups’ size, organizational capacity, and ideological location (relatively centrist), are the most likely leaders to be in a position to use roll-call votes to discipline their members to affect legislative outcomes.

Table 5 reports the cohesion scores of these party groups under the two conditions defined by hypothesis 1:

Condition A: the party group neither proposed the resolution nor requested the roll-call vote and the same other party group both proposed the resolution and requested the roll-call vote.

Condition B: the party group did not propose the resolution but did request the roll-call vote on that resolution.

The hypothesis is that a party group's cohesion under condition A will not be less than that party group's cohesion under condition B. Thus, the key statistical tests are whether the difference is in the expected direction (≥ 0) and whether the null hypothesis that the difference is less than zero can be rejected. Table 5 reports the difference in cohesion scores under these two conditions and the p-value for the test of the null hypothesis. For these three party groups, the difference is positive, which is consistent with expectations. And, for two of the three party groups, we can reject the null hypothesis that this difference is less than zero at the .07 level or lower. Thus, this preliminary evidence is broadly consistent with theoretical expectations.

Table 5. Cohesion Scores for the non-proposing PG when the proposing PG requests the roll-call vote and when the non-proposing PG requests the roll-call vote

Party Group (# of MEPs)	Average Cohesion (standard deviation)		Difference [A-B] (95 % confidence interval)	Pr[A-B < 0] (p-value)
	Condition A	Condition B		
PES (214)	0.948 (.093)	0.889 (.163)	0.059 (0.014-.104)	0.01
EPP (202)	0.887 (.137)	0.865 (.160)	0.022 (-.009-0.057)	0.07
ELDR (42)	0.910 (.101)	0.897 (.113)	0.013 (-.015-.041)	0.18

This first test of hypothesis 1 is limited in two ways. First, it is based on the assumption that the party group to which the rapporteur belongs is the proposer. Second, and as a consequence of the first limitation, the analysis is limited to the large party groups.⁷ On a very limited subset of votes having taken place in the fourth and fifth EP we can circumvent these limitations. For approximately half of all decisions analyzed in the project “Decision-making in the European Union” (DEU) (Thomson, Stokman, Achen & König (2006) we have collected information on all amendments voted upon in the EP (see appendix for the list of decisions coded so far and some preliminary information). 148 amendments were voted upon in roll call votes, but only for slightly less than 100 votes do we have all the required information. Based on these votes coming both from EP 4 but mostly from EP 5 we find the results presented in table 6.

⁷ In addition, as discussed above, the analysis focuses on final votes on resolutions.

Table 6. Cohesion Scores for the non-proposing PG when the proposing PG requests the roll-call vote and when the non-proposing PG requests the roll-call vote (DEU decisions)

Party Group (# of votes condition A)	Average Cohesion			Pr[A-B < 0] (p-value)
	Condition A	Condition B	Difference [A-B]	
ELDR EP5 (23)	0.850	0.782	0.068	0.019
EP4+5 (49)	0.813	0.786	0.027	0.380
EDD EP5 (27)	0.430	0.403	0.027	0.550
EP4+5 (37)	0.460	0.537	-0.077	0.120
GUE EP5 (27)	0.671	0.597	0.073	0.100
EP4+5 (57)	0.686	0.626	0.060	0.130
CTDI EP5 (23)	0.476	0.380	0.097	0.120
EP4+5 (30)	0.527	0.447	0.080	0.140
PES EP5 (22)	0.810	0.800	0.011	0.800
EP4+5 (43)	0.776	0.807	-0.031	0.440
UEN EP5 (19)	0.727	0.680	0.119	0.064
EP4+5 (48)	0.717	0.619	0.098	0.088
PPE EP5 (19)	0.682	0.614	0.068	0.210
EP4+5 (35)	0.687	0.656	0.031	0.510
Verts EP5 (18)	0.871	0.956	-0.085	0.000
EP4+5 (25)	0.894	0.966	-0.071	0.000

The results appearing for this smaller set of votes are more mixed. While most of the differences between Condition A and Condition B are in the expected direction, for three parties, namely the EDD, the PES and the Verts we find negative differences.

However, these differences are statistically significant for only one PG: the Greens. For all remaining parties the differences are in the expected direction, and for two parties, namely the UEN and the ELDR these differences are statistically significant at least for one of the two subsets of votes. Given the small number of votes on which these analyses are based, they have to be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, with the

rather resounding exception of the Verts we find results that resonate with our hypothesis.

Tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3

For tests of hypotheses 2 and 3, we turn to a different dataset. These hypotheses pertain to the propensity of party groups to request roll-call votes. We employ the dataset assembled by Carrubba, Gabel, Murrah, Clough, Montgomery and Schambach (2006) that covers all votes the 1999-2000 parliamentary year (July to June).⁸

Unfortunately, the dataset does not include information about the proposing party group, the level of intra-party heterogeneity on each vote, or the size of the PGs.⁹ One indication of the partisan source of legislative votes is the identity of the Commissioner of the Directorate General with authority over the policy area of the vote. We identified the policy area of each final vote on a legislative initiative from the Commission by the committee to which the proposal was assigned in the EP. The committee information was available in the Carrubba, et al (2006) dataset. We then connected that policy area with the identity of the responsible Commissioner's national party, based on the composition of the Commission during the parliamentary year 1999-2000. The party group that included that national party was then designated as the proposing party

⁸ A similar dataset for a different time period was assembled by Thiem (2006 and 2009).

⁹ In principle, one could match these votes with the identity of the rapporteur, which is available in the minutes of the EP (and, to a more limited extent, the Hix, Noury, Roland 2006a dataset). We intend to pursue that strategy in subsequent analyses.

group. We could only apply this method to votes on legislative proposals, not to votes on amendments or on resolutions. Thus, we will only analyze requesting behavior on legislative proposals. To measure PG size, we used the number of MEPs from that PG in the 1999-2000 EP as the size of each PG.

We measure heterogeneity by estimating the difference in the position of the proposing party group and the opposing major party group based on its ideological position (e.g., if the PES is the proposing party group position on a left-right issue, we identified the PPE as the major opposing party group). The basic strategy is to capture the likelihood of overlap in the preferences of the proposing party group's MEPs and those of a neighboring party group whose members are nearest the median on the opposite side (see CGH, pages 548-9 for further discussion).

To identify the positions of the party groups, we use the committee assigned the legislative proposal as an indication of the policy area. We then match that EP committee with the most appropriate issue area provided in the expert survey of policy positions of national parties in the Chapel Hill Party Dataset (Edwards et al 2005), which involved national expert surveys in 1999 and 2002. Appendix 1 provides a table describing how committees and survey questions were matched. We then averaged the national party positions for all national delegations to a party group to determine the party group position on that issue. In estimating the mean PG position, we weighted the national party delegations within each party group by their share of the party group

seats. This measure of heterogeneity ranged from 0 to 3.69, with a mean of 0.99 and a standard deviation of 1.27.

Returning to hypothesis 2, recall that we expect the size of the proposing party to be negatively related to the probability the non-proposing party requests a roll-call vote, controlling for the level of heterogeneity. The model provides no specific expectations regarding the independent effect of heterogeneity. Table 7 presents the results from a probit model that tests this hypothesis. The dependent variable is a dummy variable coded one if the non-proposing party requested a roll-call vote on the legislative proposal. The results are consistent with the hypothesis. The coefficient on party group size is negative and statistically significant. The substantive effect of party group size is relatively large. For a non-proposing party group of average size (106), the probability that party group requests a roll call is 0.06. But if the non-proposing party group size increases by one standard deviation to 206, the probability that party requests a roll call rises to 0.10.

Table 7. Probit model of non-proposing party group requests for roll call

	Parameter Estimate	Robust Standard Error
Proposing PG Size	-0.027*	0.001
Heterogeneity	0.135	0.828
Constant	-1.160	0.234
N		324

*significant at .013 level

Table 8 presents the results of a probit analysis of hypothesis 3. Recall that, for the proposing party group, we expect the likelihood that it requests a roll-call vote to increase as a function of heterogeneity and its size. Specifically, the probability of a

roll-call vote increases as heterogeneity decreases and size increases. The probit model in Table 8 includes an interaction term combining the proposing party group's size and heterogeneity and main effects for both variables. Note that we have centered these variables (adjusted them so that their mean is zero), which facilitates interpretation of the interaction effect. The dependent variable is a dummy variable, coded one if the proposing party group requested a roll-call vote on the legislative initiative.

We report the conditional coefficients—e.g., the coefficient related to a change in party group size, conditional on heterogeneity—to help with interpretation of statistical significance. The results are in the expected direction for the size of the proposing party and for the interaction effect. The effect of heterogeneity (main effect) is in the expected direction, but does not attain statistical significance. At the mean levels of party group size and of heterogeneity (zero, since the variable is centered for this analysis), the likelihood of the proposing party requesting a roll-call vote is .01. Holding heterogeneity constant at its mean, a one standard deviation increase in party group size (100) is associated with a probability of a roll-call request from the proposing party of 0.10. If we do the same exercise for different levels of heterogeneity, we observe the expected change in the magnitude of this effect. For example, if we assume a 1.27 point (one standard deviation) decrease in heterogeneity, then a change from the mean party group size to a 100 member larger party group is associated with a change from 0.02 to 0.22 probability of the proposing party requesting a roll-call. This is a large substantive effect on the likelihood of a roll call.

Table 8. Probit model of proposing party group request for roll call

	Parameter Estimate	Robust Standard Error
Proposing PG Size (centered)	0.013**	0.004
Heterogeneity (centered)	-0.031	0.266
Size (centered)*Hetero (centered)	-0.0036*	0.0017
Constant	-2.417	0.442
N		324
Conditional Coefficient (Size)	0.0077**	0.006
Conditional Coefficient (Hetero)	-0.035	0.265

* significant at .05 level; ** significant at .01 level

Tests of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 suggests specific relationships between the spatial location of the status quo, bill proposals and the ideal points of party groups. In our preliminary tests of these hypotheses we rely again on the dataset from the project “Decision-making in the European Union” (DEU) (Thomson, Stokman, Achen & König 2006) that provides information on the spatial location of bills for 67 decisions, each comprising between 2 and 6 issues. For each issue the location of the status quo, the Commission’s proposal, the outcome as well as the positions of all member states and the European parliament were coded.

In what follows we will focus on a subset of decisions which, first of all have already been coded by us (see appendix for the list of decisions), and second have a sufficient number of roll call votes to allow for some suggestive illustrations.

To illustrate the way we proceeded we use as example the so-called chocolate-directive.¹⁰ The DEU-dataset provides spatial information on four issues related to this directive, namely

1. fat content of chocolate
2. labeling of chocolate
3. UK and Irish derogation for milk chocolate
4. timing of the impact study regarding developing countries

Overall the EP voted on 105 amendments to this proposal, 31 of which were roll call votes. We were able, based on a careful reading of all amendments (including those rejected by the EP) to assign 54 votes to one of the four issues of the DEU-dataset, more precisely 15 related to the fat content of chocolate, 24 to the labeling of chocolate, three on the UK and Irish derogation for milk chocolate and finally twelve on the timing of the impact study regarding developing countries. Of these 8, respectively 9, 2, and 2 were roll call votes. The roll call requests for votes on the chocolate directive were made mostly by the Greens (see table 9).

¹⁰ We have already coded almost half of all DEU decisions, i.e. almost 30, but the analyses is not yet complete.

Table 9. Roll call requests on chocolate directive

requesting party	overall	on one of the four DEU issues
PPE	7	3
UPE	2	2
UEN	4	4
I-EDN	3	0
GUE	1	0
Verts	16	12
Total	33	21
non-RCVs	75	33
Total	108	54

From the careful reading of the amendments we were also able to identify the proposer of the amendment and his or her party group. In several instances the author of the amendment was the committee in charge. Given the important role of the committee's rapporteur (see our discussion above), we assigned in these cases the authorship to the rapporteur's party group. For the chocolate directive this meant that all proposals by the committee voted upon during the fourth EP were assigned to Paul A.A.J.G. Lannoye of the Greens, while those debated in the fifth EP were assigned to Mechtild Rothe of the PSE.¹¹

Given that hypothesis 4 leads us to expect differences between proposals where the proposing party group requests a roll call vote and those where another party group requests a roll call vote, we need information on two different sets of proposals for each

¹¹ The chocolate directive and the tobacco directive (see below) are the only decisions in the DEU-dataset coded so far for which we found votes in EP4. In EP4 we have found twenty roll call requests were made, seven by the Greens, six by the PPE, three by the I-EDN and two by the UPE during the voting session of October 23, 1997. In EP 5 during the session of March 15, 2000 13 roll call requests were made, one by the GUE / NGL, four by UEN and nine by the Greens (once together with the UEN).

party group. Unfortunately, given the small number of roll call votes on legislative matter in general (roughly 10 percent for the decisions we have coded so far), this requirement limits our analysis. Nevertheless we can present results for one issue of the chocolate directive, one issue of the tobacco-directive and finally one issue of the regulation on “jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters.”

Starting with the chocolate directive, the PPE proposed two amendments which concerned the issue of fat content. For the vote on one of these amendments the PPE requested a roll call vote, for the other one another party group did so. According to hypothesis 4, the first proposal should be closer to the PPE's ideal point than the second proposal. To determine closeness we obviously need preference measures for the PPE (and all party groups for that matter). In the absence of such policy specific preferences we use a debatable short cut. On two roll-call votes the extreme proposals were proposed, namely the proposal that only cacao butter should be used as fat in chocolate (issue position 0) and the proposal that all vegetable fats should be permitted (issue position 100). The PPE voted 83 yea 52 nay for the first proposal and 26 yea 105 nay against the second proposal.¹² We infer that the PPE's ideal point was closer to 0 than to 100. Using this shortcut the information on the proposals made by the PPE depicted in table 10 is broadly in line with hypothesis 4. The proposal closer to the inferred ideal-

¹² In Simon Hix's dataset these votes are number 2244 and number 2237 in EP 4 respectively.

point of the PPE is the proposal for which this party group requested itself a roll call vote.

Table 10. Proposals on chocolate directive and roll call requests.

	Proposal by PPE (outcome 50):Fat content
Rcv by proposing party	50
Rcv by other party	70
Voice or show of hands	
Electronic vote	

Proceeding similarly as above we also assess the preferences of the party for which we can carry out an analysis based on one issue related to the tobacco directive, namely again the PPE. On the issue of whether a very strong health warning should appear on cigarette packs (issue position 100) or whether the status quo should prevail (issue position 0) the PPE voted several times. On the former proposition, the vote came down in the PPE during EP 5 with 140 yea 50 nay. On a proposal for maintaining the status quo, which was voted upon three times the vote break-down was 9 yea 76 nay, respectively 4 yea 83 nay and 2 yea 56 nay¹³ Again, following the same rule as above we would infer (haphazardly) that the PPE had an ideal-point closer to a very strong health warning (issue position 100). Based on this, table 11 presents the proposals presented by the PPE.

¹³ In Simon Hix's dataset these votes are number 959 in EP 5, respectively number 946, number 947 and number 950 in EP 4 respectively.

Contrary to our previous analysis on the chocolate directive, the evidence appearing in table 11 is mixed. Interestingly, the PPE (in part by its rapporteur) proposed a whole gamut of proposals all over the issue scale. It is interesting to note, however, that the most important set of proposals with high values appears in voice and show of hands votes.¹⁴ Contrary to our expectations, quite a few proposals corresponding to 0 on the issue scale were also made when the party requested a roll-call vote. The distribution is, however, too varied to draw any firm conclusions, especially given our tenuous preference measure.

Table 11. Proposals on tobacco directive and roll call requests.

	Proposal PPE (outcome 95): strength of health warning
Rcv by proposing party	0, 0, 0, 80, 100
Rcv by other party	0,0, 80, 80, 80, 80, 80, 100
Voice or show of hands	0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0, 50,50,50,50, 80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80, 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
Electronic vote	0, 80, 100

Finally, turning to the regulation on “jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters,” we are only able to report the

¹⁴ This might suggest that in voice and show of hands votes control by party groups might also prevail. We thank Jonathan Rodden for suggesting exploring this in more detail.

distribution of proposals made by the ELDR (Table 12). Unfortunately our strategy for inferring preferences is inapplicable for the issue of “jurisdiction of e-commerce cases,” because all roll call votes concerned proposals linked to the final outcome (issue position 60) so that we have no variance in the voting distribution for the ELDR.

Table 12. Proposals on regulation on jurisdiction and roll call requests.

	Proposal ELDR et al (outcome 60): Jurisdiction of e-commerce cases
Rcv by proposing party	60, 60, 60, 60
Rcv by other party	60
Voice or show of hands	60,60,60,60,60,60,60, 100
Electronic vote	

This latter case in combination of the varied picture for the tobacco directive clearly suggests that we need better and especially more “exogenous” preference measure. One avenue we intend to explore is to use party manifesto information as for our tests of hypotheses 2 and 3.

5 Conclusion

The empirical results, though tentative, have several interesting implications for the study of decision making in international organizations, generally, and the European Parliament, specifically. The general argument of the paper is that voting behavior in international organizations is often only observable through roll-call votes and this

sample of votes is likely to provide a misleading view of voting behavior in general. To understand how the roll-call vote sample relates to the population of votes, we need an appropriate theory. This paper attempted the first empirical tests of a formal theory of roll-call vote requesting behavior by examining data from the European Parliament. The preliminary results suggest that the theory provides a reasonable account of several aspects of legislative behavior and may therefore be a valuable guide to correcting inference drawn from roll-call votes in various settings. Of course, whether this model applies to other international legislative or deliberative bodies depends on the details of voting in those bodies. And, unfortunately, the rapid increase in available data about roll-call votes in these chambers has not been accompanied by an equal effort to collect information about the process of roll-call vote selection or its sampling properties. But we hope this study is sufficiently encouraging about the prospects of understanding the roll-call vote requesting process that scholars will collect the relevant information to properly study voting behavior in international organizations.

For the study of the European Parliament, the analysis suggests several important lessons. First, we provide evidence from one theoretical account of the process by which roll-call votes are selected. The evidence, while far from conclusive, is consistent with expectations from the CGH model. And, it is generally inconsistent with a signaling motivation. We should be cautious (as noted earlier) in what a signaling account might predict, but it seems unlikely that party leaders interested in selecting roll-call votes to highlight their own high cohesion or embarrass another party group by revealing its low cohesion would generate the results presented in Table 5. In

that analysis, the non-proposing party groups demonstrated high cohesion when they did not request the roll-call votes (condition A) and showed lower cohesion when they did (condition B). Similarly, it would be hard to tell a story about how group size relates to signaling motivations that would predict opposite effects for size on the requesting behavior of the proposing and the non-proposing party groups (tables 6 and 7).

In addition, our results provide some insight into the likely bias in cohesion scores due to roll-call vote requests in the EP. Based on the equilibrium cohesion scores presented in CGH (figures 3a-4d), one can compare the level of cohesion for proposing and non-proposing party groups on votes roll-called not roll-called. Thus, one can assess the selection bias. In the model, the cohesion scores vary depending on the size of the proposing party group, the position of the status quo relative to the proposing party group, and the level of heterogeneity. Thus, comparisons are complicated because one needs to assume certain characteristics of these variables. But the general point is that, for relatively similar votes on these characteristics, the non-roll call votes almost always demonstrate lower cohesion than those revealed in roll-call votes.

Finally, our analysis is preliminary, and a great deal more work can be done to test these hypotheses and others generated by the CGH model. We intend to expand these tests to include a greater number of votes in the EP, to consider different measures of heterogeneity and policy area, and to expand the collection of information about non-roll call votes beyond the 1999-2000 parliament.

Appendix 1: Matching of EP Committee Policy Areas with Policy Areas in the Chapel Hill Party Data Set

EP Committee	Chapel Hill Elite Survey Question
Agriculture and Rural Development	Agricultural Spending
Budget Control	Left-Right Economic
Budgets	Left-Right Economic
Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	GALTAN
Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport	GALTAN
Constitutional Affairs	Strengthen EP
Development and Cooperation	EU Foreign/Security
Economic and Monetary Affairs	Left-Right Economic
Employment and Social Affairs	L-R General
Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy	GALTAN
Fisheries	Internal Market
Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, and	EU Foreign/Security
Industry, External Trade, R & D	Left-Right Economic
Legal Affairs and Internal Market	Internal Market
Regional Policy, Transport, and Tourism	Cohesion Policy
Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	GALTAN

Appendix 2: Coded DEU decisions

Bill information							Roll call requests													
Reference	Name	No. issues	EP amendments	With issues	revs	Overlap (revs and issues information)	En bloc votes	AR E	ED D	EL DR	G UE /N GL	I- ED N	Le ch ner u.a.	PP E- DE	PS E	TD I	UE N	UP E	Ver ts / AL E	
CNS/1996/114 COM(1995)722/3	Council Directive 2001/110/EC of 20 December 2001 relating to honey	3	43	8	0	0														
CNS/1999/151 COM(1999)364	Council Regulation (EC) No 2040/2000 of 26 September 2000 on budgetary discipline	1	42	9	0	0														
CNS/1999/225 COM(1999)565	Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation	2	76	12	1	0										1				
CNS/1999/154 COM(1999)348	Council Regulation (EC) No 44/2001 of 22 December 2000 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters	2	42	16	7	5				1				3	3					
CNS/1996/115 COM(1995)722/4	Council Directive 2001/112/EC of 20 December 2001 relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption	2	28	16	1	0								1						
COD/1999/083 COM(1999)158	Directive 2000/61/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 October 2000 amending Council Directive 94/55/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States with	1	4	2	0	0														

	regard to the transport of dangerous goods by road																			
CNS/1999/202 COM(1999)188	Council Directive 1999/105/EC of 22 December 1999 on the marketing of forest reproductive material	3	24	2	0	0														
CNS/1999/274 COM(1999)686	2000/596/EC Council Decision of 28 September 2000 establishing a European Refugee Fund	3	37	4	0	0														
CNS/1998/347 COM(1998)728	Council Regulation (EC) No 2792/1999 of 17 December 1999 laying down the detailed rules and arrangements regarding Community structural assistance in the fisheries sector	2	49	11	1	0			1											
CNS/1996/160 COM(1996)296	Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 of 30 March 1998 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms	1	80	7	15	1		3				7							5	
CNS/1999/047 COM(1999)055	Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 of 17 December 1999 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products	3	71	28	4	4												3		1
CNS/1999/236 COM(1999)576	Council Regulation (EC) No 1672/2000 of 27 July 2000 amending Regulation (EC) No 1251/1999 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops, to include flax and hemp grown for fibre	2	34	7	2	1														2
CNS/1999/116 COM(1999)260	Council Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000 of 11 December 2000 concerning the establishment of	1	38	2	12	0	12							1						9

	"Eurodac" for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of the Dublin Convention																		
CNS/1999/056 COM(1999)062	Council Directive 1999/85/EC of 22 October 1999 amending Directive 77/388/EEC as regards the possibility of applying on an experiment basis a reduced VAT rate on labour-intensive services	1	9	4	1	0													
COD/1998/323 COM(1998)623	Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies	3	60	11	1	0				3									
COD/1998/300 COM(1998)600/2	Regulation (EC) No 257/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 January 2001 regarding the implementation of measures to promote economic and social development in Turkey	3	48	11	0	0													
COD/1998/191 COM(1998)297	Directive 1999/93/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 on a Community framework for electronic signatures	3	42	12	0	0													
COD/1999/252 COM(1999)617	Directive 2001/16/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2001 on the interoperability of the trans-European conventional rail system	3	70	35	4	3						1	3						
COD/1998/252 COM(1998)	Directive 2000/46/EC of the European Parliament	2	30	15	3	3						3							

8)461	and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on the taking up, pursuit of and prudential supervision of the business of electronic money institutions																		
CNS/1999/066 COM(1999)111	1999/784/EC Council Decision of 22 November 1999 concerning Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory	1	3	0	0	0													
COD/1998/240 COM(1998)450	Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1999 on orphan medicinal products	1	43	7	0	0													
COD/2000/062 COM(2000)111/1	Regulation (EC) No 1724/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2001 concerning action against anti-personnel landmines in developing countries	3	31	6	0	0													
COD/2000/060 COM(2000)137	Directive 2002/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 February 2002 amending Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic	2	7	3	0	0													
CNS/1999/235 COM(1999)582	Council Regulation (EC) No 216/2001 of 29 January 2001 amending Regulation (EEC) No 404/93 on the common organisation of the market in bananas	2	80	12	4	0							1		3				

COD/1999/127 COM(1999)296	Directive 2000/55/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on energy efficiency requirements for ballasts for fluorescent lighting	2	27	6	9	3												9			
CNS/1999/192 COM(1999)440	2000/98/EC Council Decision of 24 January 2000 establishing the Employment Committee	2	2	2	0	0															
CNS/1999/202 COM(1999)492	Council Regulation (EC) No 1051/2001 of 22 May 2001 on production aid for cotton	2	20	2	0	0															
CNS/1998/189 COM(1998)320	Council Directive 1999/81/EC of 29 July 1999 amending Directive 92/79/EEC on the approximation of taxes on cigarettes, Directive 92/80/EEC on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes and Directive 95/59/EC on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco	2	208	96	43	21				1		9		9							15
COD/1999/6/112 COM(1999)5/722/1	Directive 2000/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 June 2000 relating to cocoa and chocolate products intended for human consumption	4	105	54	32	21			1	13	1	3		6					3	2	19
total			1353	400	140	62		3	2	14	5	10	9	25	6	13	6	7			46

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